

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Leadership Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Force

“All Hands” (COVID Mitigated) Discussion

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Suggested Talking Points

- On February 5, 2021, the Secretary of Defense directed unit commanders and supervisors at all levels to conduct a leadership “stand down” within 60 days to address the issues of extremist ideology in our ranks.
- As you heard in the Secretary’s video remarks, extremist ideologies, particularly those that undermine the oath we each took to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, have no place within the Department of Defense.
- Actively espousing ideologies that encourage discrimination, hate, and harassment against others will not be tolerated within our *(unit/command/etc)*. I expect the core principles of dignity and mutual respect to guide the actions of the personnel in this unit/organization at all times, to include our conversations here today.
- The vast majority of the men and women in the United States military and those who serve the Department of Defense as civilian employees perform their duties and responsibilities with integrity, and do not support racially and ethnically motivated violent extremists, including white supremacists, and other domestic terrorists such as anti-government violent extremists. However, recent events have shown that we must be ever vigilant in our efforts to identify and combat such ideology within the ranks and organizations.
- As such, we have four goals for today’s discussion.
 - The first is to review the meaning of the Oath we each took on becoming a member of the United States Military or a Department of Defense civilian employee;
 - The second is to review impermissible behaviors – those actions prohibited under applicable law or under DoD, Military Department or Military Service policy;
 - We’ll spend some time reviewing the responsibilities on us all for reporting to our chain of command when we observe or learn of prohibited actions, or those that cause us concern as “signs” of potential future problems; and,
 - We’ll finish with listening sessions – the Secretary wants your feedback on what actions he should consider in combating this issue, and I want it too.
- Thank you in advance for your attention. While I understand this can be a sensitive subject, it’s important that we take on this significant challenge together.

Meaning of the Oath of Office / Oath of Enlistment

Focus: Responsibilities inherent in the Oath

Certain limitations for military members in the national interest and public trust

- As Service members or Department of Defense civilian employees, we each take an Oath of Office upon entering into public service. The framers of the Constitution included the requirement to take an oath in the Constitution itself.
- While the specific wording of that oath may vary depending on the individual role in which you serve, all of our oaths include the commitment to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic, and to well and faithfully discharge our duties.
- Because we each took an oath to support and defend the Constitution, and to do our jobs to the best of our ability, we expect military Service members and DoD civilian employees to be guided in their actions by a professional ethic that prioritizes the team, the mission, and the Nation. You are essential to our success and we need you on our team.
- Never forget that being on our team is an honor and a privilege. You serve one of the most-respected institutions in America and that comes with added responsibilities and obligations. You are held to a higher professional standard and must set the example in all that you say and do. Many of you serve in positions of trust, with access to classified information or in sensitive positions. Those of you in leadership and supervisory positions are entrusted with the well-being of individual Service members and civilian employees as well as the well-being of the organization. All of you are expected to do the right thing, to look after each other, and to work together to overcome whatever challenges the mission presents.
- Those of you in the military are held to even higher standards. Service members are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the added appropriate accountability inherent in maintaining the good order and discipline essential for a fighting force.
- Although Service members enjoy the right to free speech protected by the First Amendment, the unique character of the military community and of the military mission requires a balancing of those rights with the important purpose of the military. In fact, the Supreme Court of the United States noted as follows: “[t]his Court has long recognized that the military is, by necessity, a specialized society separate from civilian society. We have also recognized that the military has, again by necessity, developed laws and traditions of its own during its long history. The differences between the military and civilian

communities result from the fact that 'it is the primary business of armies and navies to fight or be ready to fight wars should the occasion arise.'"

The Supreme Court went on to note that: "[w]hile the members of the military are not excluded from the protection granted by the First Amendment, the different character of the military community and of the military mission requires a different application of those protections. The fundamental necessity for obedience, and the consequent necessity for imposition of discipline, may render permissible within the military that which would be constitutionally impermissible outside it." (Parker v. Levy, 417 U.S. 733 (1974))

- For all of us, Service members and DoD civilian employees alike, who enjoy the great privilege of serving in our nation's defense, we recognize that due to the unique character of the military community and mission, speech that interferes with or prevents the orderly accomplishment of the mission or presents a clear danger to loyalty, discipline, mission, or morale of the troops may be restricted under some circumstances. Similarly, speech in the workplace that interferes with the mission, espouses extremist or discriminatory doctrine, or is disrespectful and harmful to colleagues, will have consequences.
- The DoD has a compelling interest in preventing the advent and spread of hate groups and activities within the Department; in guarding against illegal discrimination; in fostering a military that is politically-neutral and disciplined; and in recruiting and sustaining an all-volunteer force of sufficient strength and quality to provide for the Nation's security and to sustain that security over time.
- DoD and Military Department and Service regulations help in balancing these interests. For example, there are regulations requiring the security review of information to be released to the public by Service members and civilian employees to the public, such as articles for publication on matters related to the military or your job and duties, and prior approval is required to distribute or post material on a military installation.
- You can always seek advice from your chain of command, supervisors, public affairs, or the legal office before making public statements or publishing materials. Whether it's a letter to an editor or a social media post, if you have questions about what you want to say, your chain of command, supervisors, public affairs, or legal office can also help you ensure you're not violating regulations.

Prohibited Activities

Focus: Guiding Principles for the Total Force

DoD Policy on Extremist Activities, DoDI 1325.06, "Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces"

- **Dignity and Respect:** The Department of Defense places the highest importance on treating all personnel with dignity and respect, in an inclusive environment, free from impermissible discrimination, harassment, and hate. And as such, DoD policy expressly prohibits Service members from actively advocating supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology and causes. The Department of Defense also holds its civilian workforce to the highest standards of character and conduct required to protect and promote the public trust.
- Service members must reject active participation in organizations that advance supremacist or extremist ideology, which includes those that advance, encourage, or advocate illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, ethnicity, or national origin, or those that advance, encourage, or advocate the use of force, violence, or criminal activity or otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights. (DoDI 1325.06, Encl. 3, para 8.b.)
- **Recruitment:** Extremist organizations and individuals often target current or former military members or DoD civilian employees for recruitment because of their unique military skills, knowledge, and abilities, as well as to gain legitimacy for their cause. Service members and DoD civilian employees must be vigilant of these efforts.
- **Active Participation:** Active participation includes, but is not limited to: "Fundraising, demonstrating, rallying, recruiting, training, organizing, leading members, distributing material (including posting online), or knowingly wearing gang colors or clothing, having tattoos or body markings associated with such gangs or organizations; or otherwise engaging in activities in furtherance of objectives of such gangs or organizations that are detrimental to good order, discipline, or mission accomplishment or are incompatible with military service." (DoDI 1325.06, Encl. 3, para 8.b.) Active participation in such activities may also affect determinations of suitability or fitness for civilian employment or continued employment in the DoD and eligibility for National Security positions and/or access to classified information.
- **Indicators:** Participation may lead to violence. Some indicators of individual escalation toward extremism include clear identification with or support for extremist or hate-based ideology; making or attempting to make contact with extremist groups; the possession and/or distribution of extremist literature or paraphernalia; and threatening, intimidating, harassing, or harming of others consistent with extremism or hate-based ideology. While

such conduct may not constitute “active participation,” such signs offer an indicator for commands, prompting action and intervention that can avoid active participation down the road.

- **Duty to Reject:** Service members and DoD civilian employees must reject participation in such activities. With regard to Service members, Department policy makes clear that commanders have the authority to employ the full range of administrative and disciplinary actions, including involuntary separation, dismissal, or even appropriate criminal prosecution against those who actively engage in such activity. Supervisors and leaders of all ranks must also take action to maintain good order and discipline and root out extremism.

Responsibility to Report

Focus: Procedures for Reporting Suspect Behaviors;

Articles of the UCMJ and Administrative Options Available to Leaders

- Reporting: If you observe a co-worker exhibiting concerning behaviors, you have a responsibility to report it through the chain of command or supervision to your local security manager, and/or directly to the Insider Threat program office. Report issues of imminent threats or activity that may constitute criminal conduct to local law enforcement immediately.
 - If you observe a Service member actively participating in an extremist organization in a manner that you suspect violates the UCMJ or the Department of Defense's, a Military Department's, or Service's extremism policies, report the Service member to a supervisor, commander, or military criminal investigator.
 - Extremist behavior by Department personnel that does not rise to the level of a violation of the UCMJ or other applicable laws, or the Department of Defense's, Military Department's, or Military Service's extremism policies may still be a concern under the U.S. Government's national security adjudicative guidelines, used to assess eligibility for access to classified information or to hold a sensitive position. Creditable allegations of actions addressed in the guidelines found in Security Executive Agent Directive 4, "National Security Adjudicative Guidelines," June 8, 2017, must be reported to security management personnel. (Mention who this is for your unit/organization and provide contact information if possible).
 - Statements showing association with violent extremist behavior by Department personnel or contractors may also be considered a risk factor by the Insider Threat Program. If you observe any behaviors of concern (including extremist activity or anomalous behavior out of character) within your unit, ranks, or organization, report it through your chain of command or supervision, local security manager, or directly to the component insider threat program office. (Mention who this is for your particular unit/organization and provide contact information if possible.)
- Duty to Self-Report: All military personnel or civilians/contractors with a security clearance or in sensitive positions, as a condition of continued eligibility must self-report any personal arrests or any behaviors from counterparts that are either criminal in nature or call into question their character and trustworthiness to continue serving in such a position.

- Failure to Report: Failure to report concerning behaviors removes an opportunity for the Department to help a Service member or civilian employee, and could place themselves, the Department, and others at risk. A report of concerning behavior does not necessarily result in punitive actions against an individual.
- Command Options regarding Service members: Depending on the nature of the incident or behavior, commanders have several options when evaluating the most appropriate response given individual circumstances, and in consultation with their local legal office. These may include:
 - Counseling and corrective training
 - Removal from certain duties, such as restricted area badge access, flying status, or duties involving firearms
 - Reclassification
 - Suspension of eligibility to occupy a sensitive position
 - Denial of reenlistment or involuntary separation
 - Adverse evaluations and position reassignments
 - Designating off-limits areas
 - Ordering non-participation in specific activities, or removal of inappropriate materials
 - UCMJ Article 15 and Courts-Martial
 - Article 92: Violation or Failure to Obey a Lawful Order or Regulation
 - Article 116: Riot or Breach of Peace
 - Article 117: Provoking Speeches or Gestures
 - Article 133: Conduct Unbecoming
 - Article 134: General Article (Good Order and Discipline)
- Remember, failure to report has a negative impact on the unit or organization. Command climate suffers, groups become polarized, corrosive behaviors undermine confidence in the unit, and readiness is degraded.

Case Studies

Focus: Use Examples to Illustrate Problematic Behaviors

Example One: Paramilitary Activity

In September 2019, as a result of an FBI investigation, an Army junior enlisted member was arrested and charged in the federal criminal justice system with one count of distributing information related to explosives and weapons of mass destruction. During the investigation, it was discovered that the Service member had “disseminated guidance on how to construct improvised explosive devices” and had spoken about his desire to travel to Ukraine to fight with the Azov Battalion, a paramilitary group with neo-Nazi sympathies. At the time of his arrest, the Service member stated that he did this to cause “chaos.” He was administratively discharged from the Army and sentenced to 30 months in federal prison.

Example Two: Domestic Extremism

In February 2019, the FBI arrested a junior officer in the U.S. Coast Guard after uncovering a stockpile of weapons, ammunition, and opioids in his home. The member planned to conduct a widespread domestic terror attack targeting politicians and journalists in the Washington, D.C. area. The officer was a self-described white nationalist and conducted thousands of internet searches on neo-Nazi and neo-fascist websites using his government computer. The officer was dropped from the Coast Guard rolls and sentenced in federal court to 13 years in prison.

Example Three: Organizing and Recruiting

In May 2019, an Air Force senior enlisted member was alleged to have been a member of Identity Evropa, a neo-Nazi and white supremacist organization. The Service member also allegedly physically posted supremacist propaganda on several occasions. Furthermore, he allegedly served as an organizer with Identity Evropa, recruited other members, and appeared in photographs wearing clothes with the Identity Evropa logo and taking part in a protest sponsored by the group. He was demoted in grade and administratively separated from the Air Force.

Example Four: Racist and Supremacist Statements

In 2019, an enlisted Marine shared a number of racist social media posts, including one of himself in blackface and with Nazi propaganda. One of the posts depicted military explosives placed in the shape of a Swastika. The member was administratively discharged from the Service.

Resources and References

- AFI 16-1402, "Counter-Insider Threat Program Management," 17 June 2020
- AFI 51-508, "Political Activities, Free Speech and Freedom of Assembly of Air Force Personnel," 12 October 2018
- AR 600-20, "Army Command Policy," 24 July 2020
- Director of National Intelligence Directive, "Security Executive Agent Directive 4: National Security Adjudicative Guidelines," 8 June 2017
- DoDD 5205.16, "The DoD Insider Threat Program," 28 August 2017, as amended
- DoDI 1325.06, "Handling Dissident and Protest Among Members of the Armed Forces," 27 November 2009
- DoDM 5200.02, "Procedures for the DoD Personnel Security Program (PSP)," 29 October 2020, Change 1
- MARADMIN 016/21, "Permissible and Prohibited Conduct Related to Public Demonstrations," 12 January 2021
- MCO 5354.1E-V2, "Prohibited Activities and Conduct," 15 June 2018
- MILPERSMAN 1910-160, "Separation by Reason of Supremacist or Extremist Conduct," 28 May 2008
- MILPERSMAN 1920-070, "Separation of Officer Personnel by Reason of Supremacist or Extremist Conduct," 3 September 2019
- Navy Regulation 1167, "Supremacist Activities," 14 September 1990
- OPNAVINST 5354.1G, "Navy Equal Opportunity Program Manual," 24 July 2017
- Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks," 5 February 2021
- Task Force One Navy (TF1N), "Final Report," 2 February 2021
- Uniform Code of Military Justice, Articles 92 (Failure to Obey an Order or Regulation), 116 (Riot or Breach of Peace), 117 (Provoking Speeches or Gestures), 133 (Conduct Unbecoming), and 134 (General Article)

Common Questions & Answers

Q: If there have been issues with extremism inside the Department of Defense for a long time, why is the Secretary of Defense so focused on this now?

A: The increased level of domestic protests around the country in the past several months has emboldened some violent extremist groups to take more aggressive anti-government and racially motivated actions. These groups are known to actively target current and former military personnel. In light of current events, the Secretary wants DoD personnel at all levels to understand the threat and be trained and educated to take appropriate actions when they see indicators of extremism.

Q: Does DoD actually have a problem with extremist groups?

A: We are seeing an increase in concerning behavior. We believe this is based on societal increases, but there's also an increase in the reporting of suspect behavior. We are actively tracking down these leads and identifying any other associations with these sorts of groups. That's why we need all DoD personnel to report concerning behaviors appropriately so we can thoroughly review all credible reports.

Q: Does DoD check the social media records of Service members, DoD civilian employees, and prospective recruits?

A: Consent for obtaining publicly available social media information is provided when Service members and DoD civilian employees submit their Personnel Security Questionnaire (SF-86) to initiate the background investigation process. DoD is examining a scalable means of implementing social media screening in conjunction with background investigations. Furthermore, the FBI currently screens social media for extremism and criminal activity.

Q: I thought Service members retained their Constitutional rights when they joined the military. Are you telling me I no longer have the right to Free Speech or Peaceful Assembly?

A: "We're entrusted with the security of our nation. The tools of our trade are lethal, and we engage in operations that involve risk to human life and untold national treasure. Because of what we do, our standards must be higher than those of society at large." (General Ronald R. Fogleman, 15th CSAF, quotation on the Air Force Memorial)

Remember that military members and DoD civilian employees have access to classified information and occupy sensitive positions with access to lethal equipment, training, and tactics. Everyone with access to classified information or in a sensitive position is evaluated continuously, using government-wide guidelines to assess their strength of character, honesty, discretion, sound judgment, reliability to protect classified or sensitive information, and trustworthiness. Any doubt is resolved in favor of the national security.

Potentially disqualifying conditions include:

- involvement in, support of, or association/sympathy with persons attempting to or training to commit, or advocacy of any act of sabotage, espionage, treason, terrorism, or sedition against the United States;
- association or sympathy with persons or organizations that advocate, threaten, or use force or violence, or use any other illegal or unconstitutional means, in an effort to:
 - attempt to overthrow the U.S. Government or any state government;
 - prevent Federal, state, or local government personnel from performing their official duties;
 - gain retribution for perceived wrongs caused by the Federal, state, or local government; or prevent others from exercising their rights under the Constitution or laws of the United States or any state.



Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks



References

- SECDEF MEMO, Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks, 5 Feb 21
- DODI 1325.06 Ch1, Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces, 22 Feb 12
- US Navy Regulation 1990, Article 1167
- MCO 5354.1E Admin Ch, Marine Corps Prohibited Activities and Conduct Prevention and Response Policy



Message From Leadership



- SECDEF Video Message
 - <https://www.defense.gov/Watch/Video/videoid/784150/dvpcc/false/#DVIDSVideoPlayer581>
- Commandant and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Video Message
 - Link
- Unit leader Message



SECDEF MEMO



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

FEB - 5 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks

As Service members or Federal civil servants, we each take an Oath of Office on entering into public service. The framers of the Constitution included the requirement to take an Oath of Office in the Constitution itself. While the nature of that oath may vary depending on the individual role you serve, all oaths include the commitment to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic. Because we each took an oath to obey the law, support and defend the Constitution, and to do our jobs to the best of our ability, we expect public servants to be guided in their actions by a strong moral compass. And without question, the vast majority of the men and women of this Department serve with honor and uphold our core values.

Service in the DoD is a privilege that comes with added responsibilities and obligations by nature of holding a national security position or having access to the Nation's sensitive information. Those responsibilities are accentuated for Service members, who have accepted the jurisdiction of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the added responsibilities inherent to good order and discipline.

We will not tolerate actions that go against the fundamental principles of the oath we share, including actions associated with extremist or dissident ideologies. Service members, DoD civilian employees, and all those who support our mission, deserve an environment free of discrimination, hate, and harassment. It is incumbent upon each of us to ensure that actions associated with these corrosive behaviors are prevented. Commanders, supervisors, and all those who hold a leadership position within the Department have a special responsibility to guard against these behaviors and set the example for those they lead.

To that end, I am directing commanding officers and supervisors at all levels to select a date within the next 60 days to conduct a one-day "stand-down" on this issue with their personnel. The Secretaries of the Military Departments have discretion to authorize extensions beyond 60 days, if required by the operational nature of the unit, as well as for the National Guard and Reserve Forces units. Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1325.06, "Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces" provides the core tenets to support such discussions. Leaders have the discretion to tailor discussions with their personnel as appropriate, but such discussions should include the importance of our oath of office; a description of impermissible behaviors; and procedures for reporting suspected, or actual, extremist behaviors in accordance with the DoDI. You should use this opportunity to listen as well to the concerns, experiences, and possible solutions that the men and women of the workforce may proffer in these stand-down sessions.

This stand-down is just the first initiative of what I believe must be a concerted effort to better educate ourselves and our people about the scope of this problem and to develop sustainable ways to eliminate the corrosive effects that extremist ideology and conduct have on the workforce. We owe it to the oath we each took and the trust the American people have in our institution.

cc:
Director of Administration and Management



Significance of the Oath



Oath of Office

I, (state your name), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

Oath of Enlistment

I, (state your name), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.



Law Enforcement

- The FBI and DHS use the term Domestic Violent Extremist (DVE) to describe an individual based and operating primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States who seeks to further their ideological goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence.
- FBI Threat Categories:
 - Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremism,
 - Anti-Government or Anti-Authority Violent Extremism,
 - Animal Rights/Environmental Violent Extremism,
 - Abortion-Related Violent Extremism, and
 - All Other Domestic Terrorism Threats.
- NCIS established “Domestic Terrorism” to capture and investigate extremism.
 - Domestic Terrorism – Terrorism perpetuated by individuals and groups inspired by or associated with primarily United States based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature.
 - NCIS investigates crimes associated with domestic extremist organizations when there is an apparent Federal violation, identified violent extremist ideology, and an active service member or current Department of Navy civilian employee who has expressed an aspiration to further the identified violent ideology by threats, acts of violence, or other enabling criminal activity.



Supremacist/Extremist Prohibited Activities



Marines must not actively advocate for:	Active participation in supremacist or extremist organizations is prohibited :
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supremacist or extremist doctrine, ideology, or causes.• Individuals or organizations that advance, encourage, or advocate:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, creed, ethnicity, national origin;or• The use of force, violence, or criminal activity or otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights.	<p>Active participation includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fundraising;• Demonstrating or rallying;• Recruiting, training, organizing or leading members,• Distributing material (including posting on-line);• Knowingly wearing supremacist or extremist colors or clothing;• Having tattoos or body markings associated with supremacist or extremist organizations; or• Otherwise engaging in activities in furtherance of the objectives of a supremacist or extremist organization that are detrimental to<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good order, discipline;• Mission accomplishment; or• Incompatible with military service.



Indicators



- Examples of conduct that may indicate active participation in extremist activities or organizations (not limited to):
 - Identification with or support for extremist or hate-based ideology,
 - Making or attempting to make contact with extremist groups, and
 - Possession of extremist literature or paraphernalia.
- Report to your chain of command any observations of conduct that may be an indicator of active participation.
 - Participation may lead to violence.



Recruitment

- Extremist organizations and individuals often target our personnel for recruitment:
 - For our military skills, knowledge, abilities, and
 - To gain legitimacy for their cause.
- We all must be vigilant against recruitment.
 - Report any attempts at recruitment to your chain of command.



Off-Base Demonstrations



- Attendance at an off-base assembly is prohibited if:
 - On duty,
 - Foreign country,
 - The activities constitute breach of law and order,
 - Violence likely, or
 - In uniform where service discrediting or military support inferred.



Different Standard: Civilians



- CAN* actively advocate and actively participate in activities that are not themselves illegal, but not at work.
- Public employees, like all citizens, enjoy a constitutionally protected interest in freedom of speech.
 - Discipline for constitutionally protected speech is not authorized.
 - Unprotected speech can result in disciplinary action.
 - Discipline for certain speech, not constitutionally protected, may be in accordance with law in the employment context and may promote the efficiency of the service.



Civilians



- Unprotected speech categories
 - Illegal (Criminal and otherwise)
 - Actionable (in the employment context)
- ILLEGAL - CRIMINAL

These sections of title 18 of apply to all (Marine and civilian).

18 USC §1381	Enticing desertion and harboring deserters
18 USC § 2385	Advocating overthrow of the Government
18 USC § 2387	Activities affecting the Armed Forces generally
18 USC § 2388	Activities affecting the Armed Forces during war



Civilians



- Unprotected Speech – speech that may not be itself illegal, but can be the basis for disciplinary action.

PROTECTED	UNPROTECTED
<p>Matter of Public Concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social or other concern to community <p>AND</p> <p>Does Not Disrupt Operations / Efficiency</p>	<p>Personal/Private Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal grievances <p>Disruptive Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impairs discipline• Detracts from loyalty• Impairs worker harmony• Detracts from confidence• Impedes duties• Interferes with regular operations



Permissible Political Activities



For both uniform and civilian personnel:

- Register to vote and vote,
- Encourage others to participate in political process,
- Express purely personal opinions,
- Join a political club,
- Sign petitions,
- Attend meetings, rallies as spectator,
- Give money to political organization,
- Personal letters to editor, and
- “Like” or “follow” a political party or candidate on social media.



Prohibited Political Activities



Active-duty personnel (at all times) and civilians when they are at work:

- Campaigning for anyone,
- Hold public office (generally – special rules for reservists),
- Political posters in government housing,
- Speaking appearances for a candidate (even privately),
- Fundraising for candidate, party, or cause,
- Distributing partisan political literature,
- No large bumper stickers or signs on vehicle, and
- “Sharing” or suggesting others “like” a political post or candidate on social media.



Social Media “Dos”



- Treat others with dignity and respect.
 - Seek to understand others’ positions and use respectful language when you disagree.
- When you see racist/extremist/supremacist conduct by others, report it.
 - System administrator or supervisor, and
 - Chain of command, IG, or EOA when it involves a Service member.
- Report those who violate the law or Marine Corps policy.
 - There are times when it can be difficult to understand someone’s intent online. When it’s clear, however, that someone is posting materials that are prohibited or unlawful, talk to your chain of command about it.



Social Media “Don’ts”



- Do not advocate or promote supremacist or extremist materials.
- Do not post, share, re-tweet, “like,” etc. any materials that promote discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity), creed, ethnicity, national origin or sexual orientation; or encourage violence to prevent others from exercising their civil rights.
- Do not participate in online chats, pages, or forums for groups that: discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity), creed, ethnicity, national origin, or sexual orientation; advocates violence or criminal activity; or try to deprive others of their civil rights.
- Do not comment, post, or link to material that violates the UCMJ (including contempt toward officials or service discrediting).
- Do not post about partisan political topics; do not share or re-tweet posts from a partisan source or any that solicit funds for political campaigns.
- Do not tolerate actions by other Marines that violate these rules.



Enforcement under the UCMJ



- Misconduct subject to punishment under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)
 - Art. 88 – Contempt toward officials
 - Art. 92 – Failure to obey an order
 - Art. 115 – Communicating a threat
 - Art. 116 – Riot or breach of peace
 - Art. 117 – Provoking speeches or gestures
 - Art. 134 – Conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline or service discrediting
 - Any other violations of the UCMJ, and federal and state criminal laws
- Potential consequences
 - General court-martial
 - Special court-martial
 - Summary court-martial
 - Non-judicial punishment
 - Administrative separation
- Maximum punishment at court-martial for the above listed offenses
 - Six months to 10 years confinement per offense
 - From forfeiture of 2/3 pay to forfeiture of all pay and allowances
 - Reduction to E-1, and
 - Dishonorable discharge
- Administrative separation with an Other Than Honorable discharge



Loss of Security Clearance



- Examples of conditions that could raise a security concern and may result in suspension or loss of security clearance include:
 - Involvement in, support of, training to commit or advocacy of, any act of sabotage, espionage, treason, terrorism, or sedition against the U.S.
 - Association or sympathy with persons that advocate, threaten or use violence or any other illegal means in an effort to:
 - Overthrow U.S., state, local government;
 - Prevent U.S., state or local government personnel from performing their official duties;
 - Gain retribution for perceived wrongs caused by U.S., state, or local government; or
 - Prevent others from exercising their rights under U.S. or state law.



Continuum of Conduct

Examples of Lawful v. Unlawful Conduct



LAWFUL

1st Amendment Protected Activity

1st Amendment

- Register to vote and vote (and encourage others to participate in the political process)
- Attend meetings or rallies or marches that do not breach the peace or law an order

UNLAWFUL

Equal Opportunity Violations

MCO 5354.1E Marine Corps Prohibited Activities and Conduct Prevention and Response (PAC Order)

- Calling another by a racial slur or epithet
- Mocking another based on their beliefs

UNLAWFUL

Extremist Conduct

DoDI 1325.06 Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces

- Disseminating an extremist organization's extremist ideology
- Publishing or posting online the overthrow of civilian government through the use of violence
- Providing training to an organization or individual to further their extremist cause
- Organizing an assembly for the purpose of inciting racial violence
- Below examples under domestic terrorism are also examples of extremist conduct

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Domestic Terrorism

18 U.S. Code § 2331(5)

- Committing actions of violence (assassination, kidnapping, mass destruction) in order to influence government policy
- Threatening violence against people unless vote a certain way on a proposed law



Responsibility to Report



If you observe a Marine or co-worker exhibiting concerning behaviors, you have a responsibility to report it through the chain of command or supervision to your local security manager, and/or directly to the Insider Threat program office. Report issues of imminent threats or activity that may constitute criminal conduct to local law enforcement immediately.



Scenarios for Discussion



- I'm upset about a racist comment made by a fellow Marine.
 - Talk to your chain of command or the EOA.
- I follow someone on Facebook that occasionally posts racist comments. Will I get in trouble for that?
 - Following a person without participating (liking, sharing, etc.) in the conversation is not prohibited conduct. However, if that person is a Marine, you should report their actions to your chain of command.
- I participate in a group text and one of the SNCOs is always discussing politics, linking to articles, and talking about how incompetent specific officials are.
 - Talk to your chain of command. Partisan political activity is prohibited for active duty Marines.
- A Marine made a threatening comment about a Senator on Instagram.
 - Report this action to NCIS and your chain of command immediately.
- What should I do if I think one of my Marines is participating in a supremacist or extremist group?
 - Talk to your chain of command and consult with your command SJA.
- What can I share on social media? Don't I have free speech?
 - Your speech even online must be consistent with Good Order and Discipline and not call into question your loyalty to the Constitution of the United States.
- My boss is always talking about an activist cause. Isn't that political stuff that they're not supposed to be talking about at work?
 - Participation in an activist cause is not prohibited as long as the action is otherwise lawful and the cause is not partisan in nature. If the discussions make you uncomfortable, discuss the matter with your boss, your chain of command, or another supervisor.



Case Studies



- Paramilitary Activity
- Domestic Extremism
- Organizing and Recruiting
- Racist and Supremacist Statements



What You Need to Know



- Service is a privilege.
 - Actively advocating supremacist or extremist doctrine, ideology, or causes and active participation in supremacist or extremist organization is incompatible with military service.
 - We all have a duty to reject active participation in extremist activity.
- Be vigilant against recruitment efforts by extremist organizations or individuals.
- Choice is yours.
 - Do you want to be a Marine or do you want to be part of an organization that sows disunity and hate.
 - You cannot have divided loyalties.
- We will investigate reports of supremacist or extremist activity and those found in violation of Marine Corps policies will be held accountable.
 - We do not tolerate supremacist or extremist activity.
- Navigating issues of free speech can be complicated.
 - When in doubt contact your chain of command or seek legal advice.



Final Thought



- Dignity and Respect
 - The Marine Corps places the highest importance on treating all personnel with dignity and respect, in an inclusive environment, free from impermissible discrimination, harassment, and hate.



Listening Session



- We want to hear from you.
- Provide your feedback:
 - What are your concerns?
 - Can you share your experiences?
 - Do you have recommended solutions?



QUESTIONS?

This guide is provided for Marine Corps commanders to facilitate the SECDEF-directed Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks.

Part I: Facilitator Guidance

- Highly Recommended
 - To give context and establish a good mindset for the training, begin the session with guidance from the SECDEF, Commandant and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, and Unit Leadership.
 - Conduct a rehearsal of the brief with a select audience prior to delivering it to all personnel within the unit.
 - When possible, have a command legal advisor or staff judge advocate present or available when conducting the stand-down.
 - Ensure that participation in the training is tracked and reported, and that feedback from the discussion groups is gathered and forwarded as directed.
- Do's and Don'ts of Facilitation
 - Do strongly reinforce the Marine Corps policy and values (e.g. Core Values; dignity and respect; professionalism; accountability for one's actions; no place for active participation in extremist/supremacist activity).
 - Do ensure everyone in the room can hear the discussion. Repeat questions and comments that may have been spoken too quietly for others to hear.
 - Do be alert to statements about Prohibited Activities (Extremism in the Ranks) which rely on inaccurate or misleading assumptions, misperception or myth. Correct these inaccuracies in a resolute, respectful manner.
 - Do refer to SECDEF and CMC messages to emphasize DoD and Marine Corps leadership's talking points.
 - Do not allow only a few participants to dominate the conversation.
 - Do not let the group stray off topic. Keep the conversation focused.
 - Do not speculate or guess if you do not know how to answer a question about statistics, resources, law or policy. Offer to research the question and provide an answer later and explain your plan for following up.
 - Do not disclose or permit discussion of ongoing investigations. , including details about alleged or suspected incidents. Illustrative "schoolhouse" training scenarios can elicit appropriate discussion while avoiding impermissible disclosure of sensitive or protected information.

Part II: Speaker Notes

Slide 1

KEY THEMES:

The vast majority of Marines, Sailors, and civilian Marines uphold our core values, and do not support racially and ethnically motivated violent extremists, including white supremacists, and other domestic terrorists such as anti-government violent extremists. However, recent events have shown that we must be ever vigilant in our efforts to identify and combat such ideology within the ranks and organization.

The Marine Corps does not and will not tolerate supremacist or extremist conduct. All Hands deserve an environment free of unlawful discrimination, hate, and harassment. Such misconduct violate our shared commitment to support and defend the Constitution and those who promote these ideas seek to divide us as a nation. You make our Marine Corps better by showing others that you will not tolerate such misconduct.

- We will investigate reports of misconduct. Persons found in violation of law or policy will be held accountable

Unlawful discrimination of any kind, for any reason is corrosive to unit cohesion, violates Marine Corps core values and will not be tolerated. We strive to provide a climate of equality. Participation in supremacist or extremist activities is directly contrary to professionalism standards which all Marines are expected to follow.

- All people must be treated with dignity and respect.
- Illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity), creed, ethnicity, national origin, or sexual orientation violates Marine Corps core values and will not be tolerated within our ranks.

Slide 4

On February 5, 2021, the Secretary of Defense directed unit commanders and supervisors at all levels to conduct a leadership “stand down” within 60 days to address the issues of extremist ideology in our ranks.

Consider beginning the training conversation by reading portions meaningful to you directly from SECDEF Austin’s February 5, 2021 Memo re Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks. You may also choose to make the memo available to the training audience and spur engagement by asking participants what in SECDEF’s memo resonates with them.

KEY POINTS:

- “We took an oath to obey the law, support and defend the Constitution”
- “Without question, the vast majority of the men and women of this Department serve with honor and uphold our core values.”
- “Service in the DoD is a privilege that comes with added responsibilities and obligations”

Slide 5

Remind audience of their duty to support and defend the Constitution. This is the oath they pledged their service to.

- Understanding that we support and defend the Constitution of the United States, not a supervisor, political appointee or person occupying a political office.
- If a question is asked regarding why the Oaths of Office and Enlistment differ slightly (e.g. enlisted swear to obey the orders of the President and officers appointed over them), it should be noted that the oaths are taken verbatim from different statutes (the Oath of Office at 5 U.S. Code 3331 and the Oath of Enlistment at 10 U.S. Code 502).
- Our oath has no expiration date.
- The oath we have pledged is much bigger than ourselves.
- Never forget that being a Marine is an honor and a privilege. You serve one of the most-respected institutions in America and that comes with added responsibilities and obligations. You are held to a higher professional standard and must set the example in all that you say and do.
 - Marines are held to a higher standard. Marines are subject to the UCMJ and accountability inherent in maintaining the good order and discipline for a fighting force.

Slide 6

Law enforcement focuses on three elements when determining whether or not they are dealing with a domestic extremist activity or organization:

- Is the individual or group operating in the United States,
- Is the individual or group engaged in criminal activity (**focus is on action**), and
- Are the activities of the individual or group driven by extremist ideology/doctrine.

Slide 7

DoDI 1325.06, Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces, Encl (3), Paragraph 8:

- Marines must not actively advocate supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology, or causes, including those that advance, encourage, or advocate illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, ethnicity, or national origin or those that advance, encourage, or advocate the use of force, violence, or criminal activity or otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights.
- The Marine Corps places the highest importance on treating all personnel with dignity and respect, in an inclusive environment, free from impermissible discrimination, harassment, and hate. And as such, Marine Corps policy expressly prohibits Service members from actively advocating supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology and causes.
- **DUTY TO REJECT:** Marines must reject active participation in criminal gangs and in other organizations that advocate supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology, or causes; including those that attempt to create illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity), creed, ethnicity, national origin, or sexual orientation ; advocate the use of force, violence, or criminal activity; or otherwise engage in efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights.
- Membership in a group alone isn't enough.
- The **focus is always on actions** of the service member that has crossed into active participation (misconduct) NOT only on status as a member

- There is no master list of prohibited organizations. The focus is on the conduct of the service member.

If you are in doubt about whether a contemplated action on your part or a questionable action on the part of a fellow Marine is permissible, don't operate on assumptions or supposition, ask for assistance from your Chain of Command, command SJA.

Slide 8

While such conduct may not constitute "active participation," such signs offer an indicator for commands, prompting action and intervention (mentorship, inquiry, etc), that can avoid active participation in the future.

There are many reasons to report early:

- It affords the command the opportunity to take leadership actions (mentorship, counseling, etc.) to steer the Marine or civilian back to the right path with out it leading to disciplinary action.
- It needs to be reported to assess the trustworthiness of the Marine or civilian to have access and hold a security clearance.
- It acts as an early warning to prevent potential future acts of violence.

Slide 10

Sources: DoDD1344.10, Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces; DoDI 1325.06, Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces; DoDI 1334.01, Wearing of Uniform; MCO 1020.34H, Marine Corps Uniform Regulations

Applicable to service members.

Political Activity – The military as an institution is only effective if we have the trust of the public. Our Constitution firmly establishes that the military is subordinate to civilian leadership—which is the executive administration regardless of political party. Therefore, we are an APOLITICAL institution and must remain vigilant in preserving our reputation as an APOLITICAL body. Subject public health regulations, service members are permitted to attend political assemblies IF the assembly is peaceful, otherwise lawful (permit), the attendee is not on duty, and not in uniform.

- Service members may not be a speaker at partisan events.
- Partisan means for a political party (e.g. Republican, Democrat).
- **Prior to speaking or writing publically (e.g. media articles or blog posts) it is a good idea to discuss with your chain of command and command SJA to ensure consistency with applicable policies.

Slide 11

*Based on other regulatory prohibitions, civilians and contractors cannot actively advocate and participate at the worksite/installation. Other rules may prohibit fundraising, demonstrating, rallying, recruiting, training, organizing, or distributing materials (including posting on-line) at the worksite/installation.

Same rule set for contractors.

Slide 12

UNPROTECTED SPEECH – CRIMINAL CONTINUED

- Incitement; speech is
 - Directed to inciting or producing
 - Imminent lawless action, and
 - Is likely to incite or produce such action
- True threats
- Speech integral to criminal conduct
- Fighting words

18 USC 2387. Activities affecting the Armed Forces generally:

- Whoever, with intent to interfere with, impair, or influence the loyalty, morale, or discipline of the military or naval forces of the United States:
 - Advises, counsels, urges, or in any manner causes or attempts to cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty by any member of the military or naval forces of the United States; or
 - Distributes or attempts to distribute any written or printed matter which advises, counsels, or urges insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty by any member of the military or naval forces of the United States
- Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both, and shall be ineligible for employment by the United States or any department or agency thereof, for the five years next following his conviction.

Slide 14

Sources: 5 U.S.C. §§ 7321 – 7326 (Hatch Act – only applicable to civilians); DoDD 1344.10, Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces; DoDI 1325.06, Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces; MARADMIN 662/19, Guidance on Political Campaigns and Activity

- Use caution when expressing political opinions verbally, online, or in writing (e.g. letters to the editor) because campaigning for a candidate or advocating a partisan cause (asking for money or votes, passing out fliers, etc.) is PROHIBITED.
- Contemptuous and disrespectful language is PROHIBITED.
- A disclaimer that your views are not the views of the U.S. Marine Corps **is required** if you identify yourself as a service member.

Note: Active duty personnel and civilian employees have different rules when it comes to political activities. Active, reserve, and retired military members are subject to the provisions of DoD Directive 1344.10 (Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces). Civilians are governed by the “Hatch Act.” In general, many prohibitions applicable to military personnel are the same for civilians while they are on duty or in the federal workplace. That said, civilians enjoy greater latitude to participate in political activities when off-duty and not at work.

Slide 15

Service members

- If you are in doubt about whether a contemplated action on your part or a questionable action on the part of a fellow Marine is permissible, don't operate on assumptions or supposition, ask for assistance from your Chain of Command and your command SJA.

Civilians when they are NOT at work:

- May not be candidates in partisan elections.
- May not use official authority to interfere with an election or while engaged in political activity.
- May not invite subordinate employees to political events or otherwise suggest that they engage in political activity.
- May not knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person with business before the agency.
- May not solicit, accept, or receive political contributions (including hosting or inviting others to political fundraisers) unless both persons are members of the same federal labor or employee organization, the person solicited is not a subordinate employee, the solicitation is for a contribution to the organization's political action committee, and the solicitation does not occur while on duty or in the workplace.
- If you are in doubt about whether a contemplated action on your part or a questionable action on the part of a fellow civilian employee is permissible, don't operate on assumptions or supposition, ask for assistance from your Chain of Command and your region CL attorney.

Slide 16

- Social Media is forever. Even if you take it down—someone took a screen shot
- This is your reputation . . . and the reputation of the U.S. Marine Corps.
- Do not post on social media angry or impassioned. Really consider your words and whether you should use them.
- When in doubt, Google the 2021 Marine Corps Social Media Handbook, engage with your chain of command or, simply don't post it!

Slide 17

4th bullet applies to Service members only as it refers to UCMJ. The following slide 18 covers the wide range of speech that can violate the UCMJ.

- However, civilians may be subject to speech that is criminal. See slide 11.

5th bullet refer to slide 17. Civilians off duty not in a federal work place are not subject to this restriction.

Social Media - Civilian Discipline

- Social media posts, even off-duty posts from a personal electronic device, may result in discipline if they “disrupt the workplace.”
- Evaluation factors include:
 - Job-related
 - Egregious
 - Interfered with mission
 - Undermined public confidence
 - Affected performance
 - Disrupted the workplace
 - Impacted the employee/employer relationship
- Disciplinary actions are becoming more prevalent.
- Case by case inquiry – context matters.

Slide 18

Article 88 only applies to officers. Officials are: President, Vice President, Congress, SECDEF, Secretaries of a military department, Secretary of Homeland Security, or the Governor or legislature of any State, Commonwealth, or possession.

KEY POINTS: These actions violate various provisions of the UCMJ and Marine Corps Policy and can be punished or result in administrative consequences.

Slide 19

The below excerpt from the Presidentially Approved Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility For Access to Classified Information (Guideline A: Allegiance to the United States)

Office of the Director of National Intelligence Security Executive Agent Directive 4, effective 8 June, 2017 (National Security Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility For Access to Classified Information or Eligibility to Hold a Sensitive Position)

GUIDELINE A: ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES (excerpt)

The Concern. An individual must be of unquestioned allegiance to the United States. The willingness to safeguard classified information is in doubt if there is any reason to suspect an individual's allegiance to the United States.

Duty to Self-Report: All military personnel or civilians/contractors with a security clearance or in sensitive positions, as a condition of continued eligibility must self-report any personal arrests or any

behaviors from counterparts that are either criminal in nature or call into question their character and trustworthiness to continue serving in such a position.

Failure to Report: Failure to report concerning behaviors removes an opportunity for the Department to help a Service member or civilian employee, and could place themselves, the Department, and others at risk. A report of concerning behavior does not necessarily result in punitive actions against an individual.

Slide 20

18 U.S.C. 2331(5) the term “domestic terrorism” means activities that—

involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State;

appear to be intended—

- (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;
- (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or
- (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and

(C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States

Slide 21

- If you observe a Marine actively participating in an extremist organization in a manner that you suspect violates the UCMJ or the DoD’s, DoN’s, or Marine Corps’s extremism policies, report the Marine to the chain of command, a supervisor, or military criminal investigator.
- Extremist conduct by all personnel that does not rise to the level of a violation of the UCMJ or other applicable laws, or the the DoD’s, DoN’s, or Marine Corps’s extremism policies may still be a concern under the U.S. Government’s national security adjudicative guidelines, used to assess eligibility for access to classified information or to hold a sensitive position. Creditable allegations of actions addressed in the guidelines found in Security Executive Agent Directive 4, “National Security Adjudicative Guidelines,” June 8, 2017, must be reported to security management personnel. (Mention who this is for your unit/organization and provide contact information if possible).
- Statements showing association with violent extremist behavior by Marine Corps personnel or contractors may also be considered a risk factor by the Insider Threat Program. If you observe any behaviors of concern (including extremist activity or anomalous behavior out of character) within your unit, ranks, or organization, report it through your chain of command or supervision, local security manager, or directly to the component insider threat program office. (Mention who this is for your particular unit/organization and provide contact information if possible.)

Slide 22

In the 1st bullet scenario the Marine may take it as a teaching/mentoring moment and counsel and educate their fellow Marine. We must use our judgment and experience when engaging in a correctable moment. There is no need to be confrontational. Be professional and if tensions escalate, break contact and engage leadership.

- Posting a racist comment itself does not necessarily mean the Marine has participated in an extremist activity. However, the behavior is still unacceptable. In addition, Marine may have violated the PAC order (e.g. harassment, unlawful discrimination).

If the 3d bullet scenario involved a commissioned officer the officer may have committed a violation of Article 88 of the UCMJ. For example:

- The officer posts (public vs private) contemptuous language (disrespectful, insulting, disdainful, etc.) about the President (or Vice President, Congress, SECDEF, Secretaries of a military department, Secretary of Homeland Security, or Governor or legislature of any state) on line to a group chat/public forum would be in violation of Article 88 of the UCMJ.

Slide 23

Example One: Paramilitary Activity

In September 2019, as a result of an FBI investigation, an Army junior enlisted member was arrested and charged in the federal criminal justice system with one count of distributing information related to explosives and weapons of mass destruction. During the investigation, it was discovered that the Service member had “disseminated guidance on how to construct improvised explosive devices” and had spoken about his desire to travel to Ukraine to fight with the Azov Battalion, a paramilitary group with neo-Nazi sympathies. At the time of his arrest, the Service member stated that he did this to cause “chaos.” He was administratively discharged from the Army and sentenced to 30 months in federal prison.

Example Two: Domestic Extremism

In February 2019, the FBI arrested a junior officer in the U.S. Coast Guard after uncovering a stockpile of weapons, ammunition, and opioids in his home. The member planned to conduct a widespread domestic terror attack targeting politicians and journalists in the Washington, D.C. area. The officer was a self-described white nationalist and conducted thousands of internet searches on neo-Nazi and neo-fascist websites using his government computer. The officer was dropped from the Coast Guard rolls and sentenced in federal court to 13 years in prison.

Example Three: Organizing and Recruiting

In May 2019, an Air Force senior enlisted member was alleged to have been a member of Identity Evropa, a neo-Nazi and white supremacist organization. The Service member also allegedly physically posted supremacist propaganda on several occasions. Furthermore, he allegedly served as an organizer with Identity Evropa, recruited other members, and appeared in photographs wearing clothes with the Identity Evropa logo and taking part in a protest sponsored by the group. He was demoted in grade and administratively separated from the Air Force.

Example Four: Racist and Supremacist Statements

In 2019, an enlisted Marine shared a number of racist social media posts, including one of himself in blackface and with Nazi propaganda. One of the posts depicted military explosives placed in the shape of a Swastika. The member was administratively discharged from the Service.

Slide 25

As such actively advocating and actively participating in supremacist and extremist organizations and activities are prohibited as it is incompatible with treating others with dignity and respect.

Slide 26

Q: If there have been issues with extremism inside the Department of Defense for a long time, why is the Secretary of Defense so focused on this now?

A: The increased level of domestic protests around the country in the past several months has emboldened some violent extremist groups to take more aggressive anti-government and racially motivated actions. These groups are known to actively target current and former military personnel. In light of current events, the Secretary wants DoD personnel at all levels to understand the threat and be trained and educated to take appropriate actions when they see indicators of extremism.

Q: Does DoD actually have a problem with extremist groups?

A: We are seeing an increase in concerning behavior. We believe this is based on societal increases, but there's also an increase in the reporting of suspect behavior. We are actively tracking down these leads and identifying any other associations with these sorts of groups. That's why we need all DoD personnel to report concerning behaviors appropriately so we can thoroughly review all credible reports.

Q: Does DoD check the social media records of Service members, DoD civilian employees, and prospective recruits?

A: Consent for obtaining publicly available social media information is provided when Service members and DoD civilian employees submit their Personnel Security Questionnaire (SF-86) to initiate the background investigation process. DoD is examining a scalable means of implementing social media screening in conjunction with background investigations. Furthermore, the FBI currently screens social media for extremism and criminal activity.

Q: I thought Service members retained their Constitutional rights when they joined the military. Are you telling me I no longer have the right to Free Speech or Peaceful Assembly?

A: Service members and DoD civilian employees have access to classified information and occupy sensitive positions with access to lethal equipment, training, and tactics. Everyone with access to

classified information or in a sensitive position is evaluated continuously, using government-wide guidelines to assess their strength of character, honesty, discretion, sound judgment, reliability to protect classified or sensitive information, and trustworthiness. Any doubt is resolved in favor of the national security.

Potentially disqualifying conditions include:

- Involvement in, support of, or association/sympathy with persons attempting to or training to commit, or advocacy of any act of sabotage, espionage, treason, terrorism, or sedition against the United States;
- Association or sympathy with persons or organizations that advocate, threaten, or use force or violence, or use any other illegal or unconstitutional means, in an effort to:
 - Attempt to overthrow the U.S. Government or any state government;
 - Prevent Federal, state, or local government personnel from performing their official duties;
 - Gain retribution for perceived wrongs caused by the Federal, state, or local government; or prevent others from exercising their rights under the Constitution or laws of the United States or any state.

Although Service members enjoy the right to free speech protected by the First Amendment, the unique character of the military community and of the military mission requires a balancing of those rights with the important purpose of the military. In fact, the Supreme Court of the United States noted as follows: “[t]his Court has long recognized that the military is, by necessity, a specialized society separate from civilian society. We have also recognized that the military has, again by necessity, developed laws and traditions of its own during its long history. The differences between the military and civilian communities result from the fact that ‘it is the primary business of the military is to fight or be ready to fight wars should the occasion arise.’”

The Supreme Court went on to note that: “[w]hile the members of the military are not excluded from the protection granted by the First Amendment, the different character of the military community and of the military mission requires a different application of those protections. The fundamental necessity for obedience, and the consequent necessity for imposition of discipline, may render permissible within the military that which would be constitutionally impermissible outside it.” (Parker v. Levy, 417 U.S. 733 (1974))

Supremacist/Extremist Prohibited Activities

Marines must not actively advocate for:	Active participation in supremacist or extremist organizations is prohibited:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supremacist or extremist doctrine, ideology, or causes.• Individuals or organizations that advance, encourage, or advocate:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, creed, ethnicity, national origin; or <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The use of force, violence, or criminal activity or otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights.	<p>Active participation includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fundraising;• Demonstrating or rallying;• Recruiting, training, organizing or leading members,• Distributing material (including posting on-line);• Knowingly wearing supremacist or extremist colors or clothing;• Having tattoos or body markings associated with supremacist or extremist organizations; or• Otherwise engaging in activities in furtherance of the objectives of a supremacist or extremist organization that are detrimental to<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good order, discipline;• Mission accomplishment; or• Incompatible with military service.

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The Oath of Office

A Historical Guide to Moral Leadership

[Lt Col Kenneth Keskel, USAF](#)

Editorial Abstract: The oath of office as we know it has withstood the test of time. Although its words have gone through many transformations, the significance placed upon it by the founding fathers has remained the same. Lieutenant Colonel Keskel provides a brief historical background for the oath, followed by an examination of its specific wording and the ways it has changed over time. His insightful analysis will help military officers fully understand the moral implications of their actions.

I swear by Apollo the physician, and Aesculapius, and Health, and All-heal, and all the gods and goddesses, that, according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this Oath.

- Hippocrates, 400 b.c.

The first law of the United States of America, enacted in the first session of the first Congress on 1 June 1789, was *statute 1, chapter 1: an act to regulate the time and manner of administering certain oaths*, which established the oath required by civil and military officials to support the Constitution.¹ The founding fathers agreed upon the importance of ensuring that officials promised their allegiance; indeed, very little debate occurred before the first Congress passed this statute.² Although the wording of the military officer's oath has changed several times in the past two centuries, the basic foundation has withstood the test of time. The current oath is more than a mere formality that adds to the pageantry of a commissioning or promotion ceremony- it provides a foundation for leadership decisions.³

One finds numerous oaths in our nation. Just before commissioning or enlisting, every officer candidate and enlistee recites an oath. The president of the United States takes an oath before assuming duties. Senators, congressmen, judges, and other government officials take oaths of office. New citizens of the United States take a naturalization oath. Many schoolchildren take an oath or pledge allegiance to the flag. Although its members are not required to swear or affirm before going into combat, the US military developed a code of conduct to guide servicemen.

When an officer is promoted, the promotion ceremony often includes a restatement of the officer's oath.

The military officer's oath is a combination of constitutional requirement, historical influence, and centuries-old custom. To better appreciate the oath, one must understand its history. Toward that end, this article first provides a brief, historical background on the oath of office and then examines its specific wording as well as the ways in which it provides guidance, including moral direction, to military officers.⁴

A Brief History of the Oath

According to one reference work, an oath is "a solemn appeal to God to witness the truth of a statement or the sincerity of a promise, coupled with an imprecation of divine judgement in the event of falsehood or breach of obligation."⁵ This definition is captured in the Hippocratic oath, one of the world's oldest and most famous: "I swear . . . according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this Oath. . . . With purity and with holiness I will pass my life and practice my Art. . . . While I continue to keep this Oath unviolated, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and the practice of the art, respected by all men, in all times! But should I trespass and violate this Oath, may the reverse be my lot!"⁶ Several concepts in this oath still resonate in the one taken by today's military officer- a call to a higher power, a statement to perform to the best of one's ability, a sense of honor, and an acknowledgement of the consequences of failing to live up to one's word.

Military oaths date back to ancient Rome, where soldiers pledged loyalty to a specific general for a specific campaign. After the campaign ended, the oath no longer applied. By 100 b.c., Rome had established a professional military, and the oath became effective for the soldier's full 20-year service.⁷ Since then, this custom has continued and expanded. For example, the kings of England in the 1500s (Henry VIII), 1600s (James I), and 1700s (George III) established oaths requiring subjects to swear loyalty to their specific king.

In the United States, oaths were a part of life from the early colonial days. In 1620, when the *Mayflower* landed, the Pilgrims established the Mayflower Compact- which served as an oath, a covenant, and a constitution- and then pledged allegiance to King James, agreeing to work together as a "civil body politic" for their betterment and preservation.⁸ As settlers established colonies, they developed their own version of an oath of allegiance to English royalty.

While developing the oath of office for US officers, the founding fathers had serious concerns about pledging allegiance to any specific person. For example, during the Revolutionary War, Gen George Washington issued a general order on 7 May 1778 that required all officers to take and subscribe to an oath renouncing King George III and supporting the United States.⁹ Even prior to the 1789 constitutional requirement to take an oath, this general order had significant weight. On 1 October 1779, Washington court-martialed Benjamin Ballard for "selling rum, flour, pork, hides, tallow and other stores the property of the public without any orders or authority for doing so and *contrary to the tenor of his bond and oath of office*" (emphasis added).¹⁰ This example shows that the oath represented more than a simple, ceremonial

formality; rather, it provided overarching guidance and a standard of moral conduct, as opposed to dictating specific, limited criteria.

The first official oath of office for US military officers under the Constitution was established on 1 June 1789. The law implemented the requirement in Article 6 of the Constitution that “Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several state legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several states, shall be bound by oath or affirmation, to support this Constitution.”¹¹ This first oath was short and to the point: “I, A.B., do solemnly swear or affirm (as the case may be) that I will support the Constitution of the United States.”¹²

During a 60-year period in our history, both officers and enlisted personnel took the same oath, as required by Congress in April 1790. The oath used the wording “to bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America” rather than “to support the Constitution,” but it retained the concept of allegiance to the nation as a whole. It constituted one of 16 sections in an act that regulated the military establishment- the forerunner of to-day’s “authorization” acts.¹³ Congress periodically updated these authorization acts although the oath remained constant (with one minor addition in 1795).

The officer oath became separate from the enlisted oath again in 1862, when the 37th Congress passed an all-encompassing 176-word oath for all government officials (including military officers) to verify their loyalty during the Civil War. This “Ironclad Test Oath” included (1) a “background check” to ensure that government officials were not supporting, or had not supported, the Confederacy and (2) a part that addressed future performance, much of whose wording remains in today’s oath.¹⁴ In addition, this legislation specified that failure to comply with the oath constituted perjury and that violators would incur the associated penalties, thus formalizing the implied concept that officers are accountable for failing to live up to their oath. In 1884, after several years of multiple oaths that applied to different subsets of people (depending upon which side they fought on during the “late rebellion”), the 48th Congress amended a revised statute of 1873 that eliminated the first half of the Ironclad Test Oath and established the wording that has carried over into modern times.

At least 19 pieces of legislation address the oath- 11 affect the officer oath, three address the enlisted oath, and five address both. One notes four key variations in the wording of the officer and enlisted oaths over time (table 1).¹⁵ The other changes are either administrative or concern the application of the oath.

Table 1
Key Variations of US Military Oaths

Date/Statute	Oath	Comments
1 June 1789 1st Cong., 1st sess., statute 1, chap. 1	Officer Oath: I, A.B., do solemnly swear or affirm (as the case may be) that I will support the Constitution of the United States.	The very first law of the United States identified the requirement for government officials to take an oath or affirmation

		according to Article 6 of the Constitution.
29 September 1789 1st Cong., 1st sess., statute 1, chap. 25	Enlisted Oath: I, A.B., do solemnly swear or affirm (as the case may be) to bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America, and to serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opposers whatsoever, and to observe and obey the orders of the president of the United States of America, and the orders of officers appointed over me.	This statute separated the military oath from the oath for other public officials. It also created an oath for enlisted personnel distinct from the officer's oath, with an allegiance to the United States rather than the Constitution and a requirement to obey the orders of their chain of command. The officer's oath mirrored the oath specified in statute 1, sec. 1 for members of Congress.
30 April 1790 1st Cong., 2d sess., statute 2, chap. 10	Officer and Enlisted Oath: I, A.B., do solemnly swear or affirm (as the case may be) to bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America, and to serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opposers whomsoever, and to observe and obey the orders of the president of the United States of America, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the articles of war.	This statute, passed as the means to continue the military establishment, required both officers and enlisted personnel to take the same oath. On 3 March 1795, the last phrase changed to "according to the rules and articles of war." Each new Congress would repeal the previous Congress's act and pass a new statute creating the military establishment, including a section on the oath. In 1815 (13th Cong., 3d sess.), Congress no longer duplicated the previous military- establishment act and identified changes only to previous law establishing the military.
2 July 1862 37th Cong., 2d sess., chap. 128	Officer Oath: I, A.B., do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I have never voluntarily borne arms against the United States since I have been a citizen thereof; that I have voluntarily given no aid, countenance, counsel, or encouragement to persons engaged in armed hostility thereto; that I have neither sought nor accepted nor attempted to exercise the functions of any officers whatever, under any authority or pretended authority in hostility to the United States; that I have not yielded a voluntary support to any pretended government, authority, power or constitution within the United States, hostile or inimical thereto. And I do further swear (or affirm) that, to the best of my knowledge and ability, I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States, against all enemies,	The intent of this Civil War statute was to ensure that government officials were not supporting, or had not supported, the Confederacy. This "Ironclad Test Oath" greatly expanded and contained more detail than previous oaths. The statute also separated the officer oath from the enlisted oath, once again making the officer oath consistent with the oath of public officials.

	foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter, so help me God.	
11 July 1868 40th Cong., 2d sess., chap. 139	Officer Oath: I, A.B., do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.	This statute was the first post–Civil War change to the oath. The new oath deleted the “background check” of the 1862 version and established the exact wording of the current officer’s oath. Future legislative changes addressed the application of the oath but not the wording.
5 May 1950 81st Cong., 2d sess., chap. 169 (Public Law 506)	Enlisted Oath: I, ___, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America; that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies whomsoever; and that I will obey the orders of the president of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.	This statute was the first post–World War II legislation on the oath, establishing the Uniform Code of Military Justice to unify, consolidate, revise, and codify the Articles of War, the Articles of Government of the Navy, and the Disciplinary Laws of the Coast Guard. Section 8 identified a standard oath for all enlisted personnel.
5 October 1962 87th Cong., 2d sess. (Public Law 87-751)	Enlisted Oath: I, ___, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the president of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.	This legislation was enacted to make the enlisted oath more consistent with the officer oath, using the phrase “support and defend the Constitution” and adding “So help me God” at the end. This was the last legislative change to the wording of either oath. Subsequent legislation on the oath addressed administrative issues.

The Oath's Message

Some people may think that the focus on the oath and our founding fathers is merely patriotic, feel-good rhetoric and may question the significance of the oath in today's environment.¹⁶ However, during Operation Allied Force, Gen Wesley Clark encountered a dilemma that very much involved the oath. As combatant commander of US European Command, he had allegiance to the United States. But he also served as supreme allied commander, Europe, with responsibility to the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In his book *Waging Modern War*, General Clark alludes to his dilemma. Who should have priority- the United States or NATO? Upon initiating the air campaign, Clark first called Javier Solano, NATO's secretary-general, before he called Gen Hugh Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Explaining his predicament, he notes, "I was the overall commander, but represented a nation that didn't want to participate."¹⁷ Interestingly, rather than choosing a term such as *worked for* or *served*, he uses *represented*, which connotes a lesser degree of responsibility and a passive relationship instead of an active allegiance. Indeed, Clark dedicated his book to Solano and NATO's leaders and armed forces- not to the United States and its military.¹⁸

Although General Clark did not renounce his allegiance to the US Constitution in favor of the NATO alliance, he struggled with the question of where his responsibilities and priorities lay. Despite the differences of opinion between the United States and NATO regarding interests, goals, and methods, both parties had the same overarching objective- stopping the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Consequently, Clark did not have to make an either-or choice.¹⁹ However, this example shows how the complexity of modern war and the problems generated by working with alliances can cause even a great American like General Clark to struggle. The act of reaffirming the oath of office should serve to guide all officers when they find themselves in difficult situations.

This brief history of the oath makes the significance of its wording more apparent. The oath provides enduring guidance for military officers. Each part carries its own history and message:

I, A.B., Do Solemnly Swear (or Affirm)

The oath begins with an option to *swear* or *affirm*. Although current common law places less religious connotation on the word *swear*, the term *oath* clearly had such a connotation in the late 1700s. In fact, the original legislation referred to an "oath or affirmation." Recognizing that some religious groups, such as the Quakers, might object to "swearing" to a Supreme Being or that someone might not believe in a Supreme Being, Congress provided the option to *affirm*. This wording is also consistent with the option for the president to swear or affirm, as prescribed in Article 2 of the Constitution. Either way, the oath signifies a public statement of personal commitment. Officers must take personal responsibility for their actions.

That I Will Support and Defend the Constitution of the United States

To understand the opening pledge, one should know and understand the Constitution. Prior to taking their oath upon commission or reaffirming it upon promotion, too few officers take the

time to read and study the document they swear to support and defend. The oath requires officers to support and defend the Constitution- not the president, not the country, not the flag, and not a particular military service. Yet, at the same time, the Constitution symbolizes the president, the country, the flag, the military, and much more. The preamble to the Constitution succinctly highlights the ideals represented by that document.²⁰ Because the Constitution was built on a series of checks and balances that distribute power across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, officers must give their allegiance to all three entities- despite the fact that the chain of command leads to the president. These checks and balances create an inefficiency inherent in America's democratic system that often proves frustrating for military officers, whose environment tries to provide the most efficient and effective fighting force available.²¹

The original oath of 1789 mentioned only that one must *support* the Constitution. Although many people may at first consider the phrase *support* and *defend* as a single thought, each word carries a slightly different connotation. George Washington conveys the notion of *support* in his farewell address: "The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government. But the Constitution, which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish Government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government."²²

The words *and defend* were added in 1862, during the Civil War, when defense and preservation of the nation became paramount.²³ The passive pledge to support was expanded to include an active requirement to defend. The phrase *support and defend the Constitution* is purposely vague, allowing better minds to interpret and improve, within certain guidelines.²⁴ To understand the significance of the wording, one should compare the US oath to the Soviet version, the latter requiring officers "unquestioningly to carry out the requirements of all military regulations and orders of commanders and superiors."²⁵ It is a true blessing that America does not require its officers to obey "unquestioningly" but gives them the opportunity and flexibility for innovation. But with that flexibility come both responsibility and accountability for one's actions.

Against All Enemies, Foreign and Domestic

This phrase was added in 1862 as a direct result of the Civil War- specifically, to address the possibility of Union soldiers joining the Confederacy (most notably the forces commanded by Gen Robert E. Lee). That is, people who had previously sworn allegiance to the United States were now fighting against it.

Although people now have little concern about another civil war, our military must still prepare for all enemies and contingencies. The terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 caught many Americans off guard. The response to the launching of fighter escorts shows how the nation's leadership faced the dilemma of flying combat air patrols over the United States (defending the Constitution) while trying to comply with current laws on posse comitatus (supporting the Constitution).²⁶ Military officers cannot simply maintain the status quo- they must look toward the future, identify emerging trends, and develop capabilities to counter the entire range of threats. Apparently, our current capability to respond to and, more importantly, prevent a future asymmetric attack is inadequate. Officers must ensure that they address *all enemies* and not

merely advocate servicecentric needs at the expense of national requirements. For example, we have long known about the shortage of intelligence from human sources that we need if we are to analyze the capability and intent of emerging nonstate actors; yet, the Air Force intends to purchase over 300 F-22 aircraft at a cost of \$63 billion to replace existing fighters that can already counter the air forces of any major state actor for the foreseeable future.²⁷ We must think hard about making improvements to an existing service strength instead of funding a known national shortfall.²⁸ Our oath demands that we support and defend against all enemies- not just high-profile or high-profit threats.

That I Will Bear True Faith and Allegiance to the Same

The phrase *faith and allegiance* dates back at least to 1606, when King James required an oath of “uttermost faith and allegiance to the King’s majesty” from everyone leaving for America to work in the Virginia Company.²⁹ However, the officer’s oath ensures allegiance to the Constitution as a whole, not just the president. Officers should pledge allegiance to the nation as a whole rather than their military service or organization, an idea reminiscent of the Air Force core value of “service before self.” However, officers must not construe *service* as *US Air Force*. The Army’s core value of “selfless service” provides a clearer connotation of the notion of serving others.³⁰ Furthermore, the Air Force’s guide on core values discusses maintaining “faith in the system,” which includes not just the military system but the system of democratic government embodied in the Constitution.³¹

Even though the Constitution built a system of checks and balances to embrace multiple branches of government, the founding fathers cautioned against counterproductive parochialism. In his inaugural address, Washington warned, “I behold the surest pledges, that as on one side, no local prejudices, or attachments; no separate views, nor party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye which ought to watch over this great assemblage.”³² Officers’ allegiance compels them to work together to develop the best solutions for the nation, rather than engage in interservice competition to obtain the biggest piece of the defense budget.

That I Take This Obligation Freely, without Any Mental Reservation or Purpose of Evasion

This passage also originated during the Civil War. Congress and President Abraham Lincoln, wanting to ensure that soldiers not defect, expanded the oath in an attempt to guarantee loyalty.³³ In the final analysis, however, loyalty depends upon the integrity of the individual.

This notion corresponds to the Air Force’s core value of “integrity first,” the Marine Corps and Navy’s core value of “honor,” and the Army’s core values of “integrity” and “honor.”³⁴ Integrity is a learned trait. Whether that learning is based upon a religious upbringing or an embracing of acceptable norms of society, honor and integrity are part of the core of all military services. Maintaining integrity is implicit in the oath and must guide officers when they face conflicts of interest and hard choices.³⁵

And That I Will Well and Faithfully Discharge the Duties of the Office on Which I Am about to Enter

This wording has its genesis in the first statute of 1789. In addition to the standard oath, the secretary of the Senate and the clerk of the House of Representatives had to take an additional oath to “solemnly swear or affirm, that I will truly and faithfully discharge the duties of my said office, to the best of my knowledge and abilities.”³⁶

This clause epitomizes the Air Force core value of “excellence in all we do,” the Marine Corps and Navy’s value of “commitment,” and the Army’s core value of “duty.” We must be proactive and perform our duties to the best of our abilities, mastering our specialties while we are junior officers and then gaining breadth as we advance in rank. The progress of the nation depends upon our doing so.

So Help Me God

Controversy over the separation of church and state sometimes clouds this final phrase; nevertheless, it is the most important one in the oath. Our actions have moral and, for those who believe in a Supreme Being, even religious implications. Sometimes military officers seem hesitant to embrace their religion publicly or acknowledge the significance of divine guidance.³⁷ However, American history is replete with examples of public appeals to a higher being for guidance and protection. The Declaration of Independence includes an appeal “to the Supreme Judge of the world,” and, although the Constitution does not include the phrase *so help me God* in the president’s oath, Washington added those words when he took the first oath.³⁸ President Lincoln openly addressed the concept of divine guidance in the Gettysburg address: “This nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom.” When the pledge of allegiance added the phrase “under God” in 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower commented, “In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America’s heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country’s most powerful resource in peace and war.”³⁹

So help me God became part of the officer oath in 1862, but the enlisted oath did not add these words until 1962. The *Congressional Record* provides superb insight into their meaning:

The words, “So help me God,” are not a part of the obligation assumed upon taking the oath. They constitute rather an assertion of sincerity to undertake the duties of military service in good faith and with the aid of the highest power recognized by the enlistee. It is directed solely to his or her personal conception of the almighty, whatever that may be or whatever it may not be. There is no effort to impose on the enlistee any established religious conception, or even to require his acknowledgement of any religious conception. . . . For the vast majority of the persons taking the oath, however, this addition will assure a unique degree of personal conviction not otherwise attainable, and will thus prove a welcome source of both personal and national strength.⁴⁰

Even atheists have a moral obligation from a societal perspective. One finds this concept as far back as 400 b.c., when Sun Tzu, in *The Art of War*, starts his first chapter with the statement “War is a matter of vital importance to the State. . . . Therefore appraise it in terms of five fundamental factors. . . . The first of these factors is moral influence.”⁴¹ Clearly, one of the

greatest military minds of all time understood the moral implications of our actions and their importance for success.

So help me God also implies retribution if officers do not keep their word. Compare the part of the Soviet oath that ends with “If I break this solemn vow, may I be severely punished by the Soviet people, universally hated, and despised by the working people.”⁴² Although that is quite a condemnation, in actuality it is less severe than the potential consequences for someone who has a strong moral or religious foundation. *So help me God* acknowledges that no stronger commitment exists.⁴³

Conclusion

By studying the key documents and events in America’s history, military officers can gain better insight into their oath of office and the moral implications of their actions. Junior officers should focus on how to well and faithfully discharge the duties of their office. For senior officers, the oath should carry even greater significance as they use a more indirect style of leadership to instill in their followers the service’s core values (table 2).

Table 2

Comparison of the Oath of Office to Core Values

Oath of Office	Core Values		
	<i>Air Force</i>	<i>Navy/ Marine Corps</i>	<i>Army</i>
I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.	Service before Self	Courage	Selfless Service Personal Courage Loyalty
I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion.	Integrity First	Honor	Integrity
I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter.	Excellence in All We Do	Commitment	Duty Respect

Officers must develop the skills to make the appropriate leadership decisions when guidance may be vague on how best to support and defend the Constitution. They must take the time to identify capabilities for addressing the entire spectrum of conflict and wrestle with ways of resolving conflicting priorities in coalition warfare. Individuals at all levels must focus on the needs of the nation rather than on the desires of their services. Finally, officers must embrace the moral foundation symbolized in the phrase *so help me God* since it is the heart and soul of the success of future generations of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

Notes

1. Richard Peters, ed., *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, vol. 1 (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1845), 23.
2. See Joseph Gales Sr., ed., *Annals of Congress: The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States*, vol. 1, *March 3, 1789 to March 3, 1791* (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1834). Although the *Congressional Record* contains hundreds of pages on topics such as public credit, public debt, and duties on tonnage, one finds only three pages on the oath that are worthy of discussion.
3. The Air Force's Air War College includes the officer and enlisted oath on the inside back cover of its textbook on leadership and ethics. The code of conduct is on the inside front cover. In his book *True Faith and Allegiance: The Burden of Military Ethics* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), James H. Toner includes the officer and enlisted oaths on the page that precedes the table of contents.
4. Due to limitations of space, this article focuses on the officer's oath. Many of the same themes and ideas apply to the dedicated professionals in our enlisted force.
5. *American Peoples Encyclopedia*, 1956 ed., s.v. "oath." According to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., an oath is "a solemn [usually] formal calling upon God or a god to witness to the truth of what one says or to witness that one sincerely intends to do what one says (2): a solemn attestation of the truth or inviolability of one's words."
6. *American Peoples Encyclopedia*, 1956 ed., s.v. "Hippocrates."
7. Lt Col Thomas H. Reese, "An Officer's Oath," *Military Review*, January 1964, 25.
8. Harold Melvin Hyman, *To Try Men's Souls: Loyalty Tests in American History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 12–13.
9. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745–1799*, vol. 11 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1931–1944), online, Internet, 13 January 2002, available from <http://www.memory.loc.gov>. (Click on "search"; search on "George Washington, May 7, 1778, General Orders.") Washington's oath for commissioned officers is as follows:

I . . . do acknowledge The United States of America to be Free, Independent and Sovereign States and declare that the People thereof owe no Allegiance or Obedience to George the Third, King of Great Britain and I renounce refuse and abjure any Allegiance or Obedience to him, and I do swear (or affirm) that I will to the utmost of my Power support, maintain and defend the said United States against the said King George the Third, his heirs and Successors and his and their Abettors, Assistants and Adherents and will serve the said United States in the office of . . . which I now hold with Fidelity according to the best of my skill and understanding.

10. Ibid. In another example, on 28 December 1780, Washington court-martialed Thomas Dewees, finding him guilty of two offenses: (1) not taking the oath of office and (2) “selling public wood to the prejudice of the service.” Here we see that not taking the oath is not simply an administrative error. In fact, the practice at the time was to publish the sentence in a newspaper “to prevent in future the commission of such crimes.” Today’s 24-hour worldwide media coverage continues to publicize military indiscretions and has an impact on how the public perceives the military.

11. Mortimer J. Adler provides a superb analysis of the Constitution in *We Hold These Truths: Understanding the Ideas and Ideals of the Constitution* (New York: Macmillan, 1987).

12. Peters, 23. Using the initials “A.B.” is a legislative format to identify a place filler for the person’s first and last names.

13. Ibid., 119–21. As is the case today, separate “appropriation” acts specified the budgets.

14. The oath of 1862 is as follows:

I, A.B. do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I have never voluntarily borne arms against the United States since I have been a citizen thereof; that I have voluntarily given no aid, countenance, counsel, or encouragement to persons engaged in armed hostility thereto; that I have neither sought nor accepted nor attempted to exercise the functions of any officers whatever, under any authority or pretended authority in hostility to the United States; that I have not yielded a voluntary support to any pretended government, authority, power or constitution within the United States, hostile or inimical thereto. And I do further swear (or affirm) that, to the best of my knowledge and ability, I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States, against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter, so help me God.

See *An Act to Prescribe an Oath of Office, and for Other Purposes*, 37th Cong., 2d sess., chap. 128.

15. To trace legislation relating to military oaths, one should understand the basic organization, structure, and four major changes to legislation in the United States. The original laws, starting in June 1789, were identified as statutes, organized by chapters and sections. On 1 December 1873,

Congress enacted the Revised Statutes, a single act that codified all the permanent laws in force. These statutes superseded all the previous ones from 1789 through 1873. The Revised Statutes were organized by title and section. The next overall effort to better organize the laws of the land occurred in 1926, when the *United States Code (USC)* replaced the Revised Statutes. The laws were organized into 50 titles and divided into sections. Title 5 dealt with the Executive Department (including military officers); Title 10 dealt with the Army (and the Army Air Forces within the Army); Title 32 concerned the National Guard; and Title 34 dealt with the Navy/Marine Corps. The most recent (and ongoing) version of the *USC* began in 1946, with a comprehensive project of revising and enacting all of the *USC* into “positive law,” which did away with the need to refer back to previous statutes to clarify the current law of the land. The current *USC* is organized by title and section but also includes subtitles, chapters, and parts to further divide and organize the legislation. The current Title 10 consolidates the military services (except the National Guard) into a single title, although there is still legislation relating to the Department of Defense, a department in the executive branch, in Title 5. At least 19 pieces of legislation address military oaths. For a more detailed description of the legislative history of the oath of office, contact the author by E-mail: "mailto:kdkkeskel@hotmail.com" .

16. In a highly publicized confrontation between Gen Douglas MacArthur and President Harry S. Truman during the Korean War, MacArthur openly criticized the administration’s handling of the war effort, even threatening to invade China and thus defy the civilian leadership’s policy. As a result of the general’s actions, on 11 April 1951 President Truman relieved MacArthur as supreme commander, United Nations Command. Truman explained how, from his perspective, MacArthur did not support the requirements of the Constitution and did not faithfully discharge his duties: “Full and vigorous debate on matters of national policy is a vital element in the constitutional system of our free democracy. It is fundamental, however, that military commanders must be governed by the policies and directives issued to them in the manner provided by our laws and Constitution. In time of crisis, this consideration is particularly compelling.” “Truman Dismisses MacArthur,” *CNN Interactive*, on-line, Internet, 14 October 2002, available from <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/05/documents/macarthur>.

17. Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 154.

18. Although it is well understood that the United States is a NATO member and therefore a part of Clark’s dedication, he consciously seems to focus on NATO rather than the United States.

19. One could also argue that Clark’s support of NATO over current US policy is consistent with the Constitution, which provides the authority for the executive branch to make treaties; thus, the NATO alliance, ratified by Congress according to the Constitution, is consistent with that document.

20. According to the preamble, “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

21. Maj Larry A. Helgeson has similar thoughts in his article “Moral Obligations from our Oath to the U.S. Constitution,” in *United States Air Force Academy Journal of Professional Military Ethics*, 1988, 3–19.

22. *George Washington’s Farewell Address to the People of the United States*, 17 September 1796, on-line, Internet, 4 January 2002, available from <http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/farewell/text.html>.

23. Part of President Abraham Lincoln’s justification for the Emancipation Proclamation demonstrates the thinking of the era: “I felt that measures, otherwise unconstitutional, might become lawful, by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the constitution, through the preservation of the nation.” See Helgeson, 15.

24. Even Washington understood that the Constitution was not perfect. Prior to the Continental Congress, he observed, “Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair. The event is in the hand of God.” John Romain Rood, *The History of Building the Constitution of the United States* (Detroit: Detroit Law-Book Co., 1948), 13.

25. Helgeson, 4. Many countries today require an allegiance to a king or head of state. For example, the following countries require officers to swear allegiance to an individual:

- Great Britain: “I swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Second, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend Her Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of Her Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors, and of the Air Officers and other Officers set over me.”
- Jordan: “I swear to be loyal to God, country, and the king, and conduct all my job requirements with honor and dignity, with no discrimination or bias, and to obey all military orders issued to me from my superiors.”
- Brazil: “As I incorporate to the Brazilian Air Force, I promise to obey strictly the orders given by the authorities, respect my superiors in hierarchy, and be good to my comrades/subordinates; dedicate myself entirely to the service of my country, defending honor, institutions and duties with the sacrifice of my own life.”

Information provided by international officers attending the US Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., spring 2002.

26. The concept of posse comitatus is based on an act of Congress (20 stat. L., 145, chap. 263, sec. 15, 18 June 1878). Sec. 15 starts with the following statement: “From and after the passage of this act it shall not be lawful to employ any part of the Army of the United States, as a posse comitatus, or otherwise, for the purpose of executing the laws, except in such cases and under such circumstances as such employment of said force may be expressly authorized by the Constitution or by act of Congress.” The law was passed as a result of 15 years of perceived

“military occupation” of the South after the Civil War. See *The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878*, on-line, Internet, 22 August 2002, available from "http://www.dojgov.net/posse_comitatus_act.htm"

27. Jim Garamone, “F-22 Gets Green Light for Low-Rate Production,” *American Forces Information Service News Articles*, on-line, Internet, 4 April 2002, available from http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Aug2001/n08162001_200108161.html.

28. In fact, the F-22 Web site highlights how our new-generation fighter will take us from air superiority to air dominance. The site actually has a clock that counts down the seconds to air dominance. See *F-22 Raptor Team Infonet*, on-line, Internet, 4 April 2002, available from <http://www.f22-raptor.com>. Another example of a neglected shortfall is strategic lift.

29. Hyman, 5.

30. The Army has seven core values: integrity, honor, loyalty, respect, duty, personal courage, and selfless service.

31. *United States Air Force Core Values* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Air Force, 1 January 1997).

32. *National Archives and Records Administration: Washington's Inaugural Address*, 30 April 1789, on-line, Internet, 4 January 2002, available from http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/american_originals/inaugtxt.html. Washington reiterated this warning against parochialism in his farewell address eight years later: “In the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party, generally.” See *George Washington's Farewell Address*. The problem of parochialism is also highlighted in the New Testament of the Bible: If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand (Mark 3:24).

33. It is ironic that even patriots like George Washington and John Adams initially took an oath and swore allegiance to the king of England and later, as clearly stated in the Declaration of Independence, acknowledged that sometimes one must go against that pledge: “Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government.” In another piece of irony, immediately after the chancellor of New York swore in George Washington as president of the United States (during which Washington pledged to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution), the chancellor proclaimed, “Long live George Washington, president of the United States,” rather than proclaiming long life for the Constitution. See Gales, 27.

34. The Navy and Marine Corps share the core values of honor, courage, and commitment.

35. Vice Adm James B. Stockdale said that “a person’s integrity can give him something to rely on when his perspective seems to blur, when the rules and principles seem to waiver, and when he’s faced with hard choices of right and wrong.” Quoted in Maj Mark A. Hyatt’s “Honor and

Ethics Must Be Reflected in the United States Air Force Officer's Oath of Office," *United States Air Force Academy Journal of Professional Military Ethics*, 1988, 25.

36. Peters, 24.

37. In the State of the Union Address of 1987, President Reagan remarked, "Finally, let's stop suppressing the spiritual core of our national being. Our nation could not have been conceived without divine help." See "Ronald Reagan: State of the Union Address, 27 January, 1987," *This Nation*, on-line, Internet, 14 October 2002, available from <http://www.thisnation.com/library/sotu/1987rr.html>.

38. Washington's farewell address highlighted the link between religious values and the success of this experiment in democracy: "Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." See *George Washington's Farewell Address*.

39. *The Original Pledge of Allegiance*, on-line, Internet, 25 September 2002, available from <http://www.usflag.org/the.pledge.of.allegiance.html>. The pledge of allegiance originated in 1892, when Francis Bellamy published a few words in *The Youth's Companion* magazine for schoolchildren to recite on 12 October 1892, the 400th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America. Over 12 million children recited the initial version of the pledge that day: "I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands—one nation indivisible—with liberty and justice for all." On 14 June 1943, the first National Flag Conference changed the words "my flag" to "the Flag of the United States," and in 1942 Congress formally recognized the pledge. One year later, the Supreme Court ruled that students could not be forced to recite it. In 1953, after lobbying from the Knights of Columbus, the pledge saw its final change, adding the phrase "under God." Unfortunately, that phrase recently came under scrutiny when the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled that the pledge constitutes an unconstitutional endorsement of religion because it contains the phrase "under God." On the bright side, it is encouraging to see so many public officials actively working to reverse that decision.

40. House, *Armed Forces Oath of Enlistment, Report to Accompany H.R. 218*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 25 July 1961, 4. The Constitution guarantees that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." Both Congress and the Supreme Court have ruled that including the words so help me God is not unconstitutional.

41. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 63.

42. Helgeson, 4.

43. The Bible includes references to oaths. For example, Matthew quotes Jesus as saying, Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord (Matt. 5:33).

Contributor

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Disclaimer

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author cultivated in the freedom of expression, academic environment of Air University. They do not reflect the official position of the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force or the Air University.



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

FEB - 5 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks

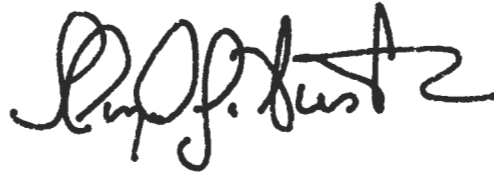
As Service members or Federal civil servants, we each take an Oath of Office on entering into public service. The framers of the Constitution included the requirement to take an Oath of Office in the Constitution itself. While the nature of that oath may vary depending on the individual role you serve, all oaths include the commitment to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic. Because we each took an oath to obey the law, support and defend the Constitution, and to do our jobs to the best of our ability, we expect public servants to be guided in their actions by a strong moral compass. And without question, the vast majority of the men and women of this Department serve with honor and uphold our core values.

Service in the DoD is a privilege that comes with added responsibilities and obligations by nature of holding a national security position or having access to the Nation's sensitive information. Those responsibilities are accentuated for Service members, who have accepted the jurisdiction of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the added responsibilities inherent to good order and discipline.

We will not tolerate actions that go against the fundamental principles of the oath we share, including actions associated with extremist or dissident ideologies. Service members, DoD civilian employees, and all those who support our mission, deserve an environment free of discrimination, hate, and harassment. It is incumbent upon each of us to ensure that actions associated with these corrosive behaviors are prevented. Commanders, supervisors, and all those who hold a leadership position within the Department have a special responsibility to guard against these behaviors and set the example for those they lead.

To that end, I am directing commanding officers and supervisors at all levels to select a date within the next 60 days to conduct a one-day "stand-down" on this issue with their personnel. The Secretaries of the Military Departments have discretion to authorize extensions beyond 60 days, if required by the operational nature of the unit, as well as for the National Guard and Reserve Forces units. Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1325.06, "Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces" provides the core tenets to support such discussions. Leaders have the discretion to tailor discussions with their personnel as appropriate, but such discussions should include the importance of our oath of office; a description of impermissible behaviors; and procedures for reporting suspected, or actual, extremist behaviors in accordance with the DoDI. You should use this opportunity to listen as well to the concerns, experiences, and possible solutions that the men and women of the workforce may proffer in these stand-down sessions.

This stand-down is just the first initiative of what I believe must be a concerted effort to better educate ourselves and our people about the scope of this problem and to develop sustainable ways to eliminate the corrosive effects that extremist ideology and conduct have on the workforce. We owe it to the oath we each took and the trust the American people have in our institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. J. Gust". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a stylized "J".

cc:
Director of Administration and Management

STAND-DOWN TO ADDRESS EXTREMISM IN THE RANKS

Date Signed: 3/5/2021 | MARADMINS Number: 125/21

MARADMINS : 125/21

R 052049Z MAR 21

MARADMIN 125/21

MSGID/GENADMIN/CMC WASHINGTON DC DMCS//

SUBJ/STAND-DOWN TO ADDRESS EXTREMISM IN THE RANKS//

REF/A/LTR/SECDEF/05FEB21//

REF/B/GENADMIN/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC/12164ZFEB21//

REF/C/DOC/DOD/22FEB12//

REF/D/DOC/DON/16SEP90//

NARR/REF A IS SECDEF MEMORANDUM DIRECTING DOD-WIDE TRAINING STAND-DOWN TO ADDRESS EXTREMISM IN THE RANKS. REF B IS ALNAV 010/21 DIRECTING DON-WIDE TRAINING STAND-DOWN TO ADDRESS EXTREMISM IN THE RANKS. REF C IS DODI 1325.06, HANDLING DISSIDENT AND PROTEST ACTIVITIES AMONG MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES. REF D IS US NAVY REGULATIONS, 1990. ARTICLE 1167 ON SUPREMACIST ACTIVITIES.//
POC/DAVID AHN/LTCOL/JAD(JCA)/TEL: (703) 693-8164/EMAIL: DAVID.AHN@USMC.MIL//
POC/GILBERTO YGUERABIDE/CAPT/TECOM(PSD)/TEL: (703) 784-4726/EMAIL: GILBERTO.YGUERABIDE@USMC.MIL//

GENTEXT/REMARKS/1. This MarAdmin provides instructions and administrative details for conducting and documenting the training stand-down on extremism per references A and B.

2. APPLICABILITY. This MarAdmin applies to the Total Force.

3. MISSION. No later than 2 April 2021, commanders and supervisors at all levels will conduct and document a leadership stand-down in order to address issues of extremism in the ranks.

4. EXECUTION.

4.a. INTENT.

4.a.1. This training stand-down is intended to ensure Marines, Sailors and Marine Corps civilians understand the importance of their oath of office; can describe impermissible behaviors, and the procedures for reporting suspected, or actual extremist behaviors in accordance with references C and D. End state is that the force is trained to standard, and leaders have opportunity to listen to the concerns, experiences, and possible solutions that may be offered in these

stand down sessions.

4.b. TASKS.

4.b.1. Use the training materials located at www.marines.mil/standdown to facilitate the stand-down.

4.b.2. Conduct the training in a leader-led, discussion format.

4.b.3. Discuss the importance of the oaths of office.

4.b.4. Discuss prohibitions on active participation in extremist and supremacist activities and organizations.

4.b.5. Discuss reporting violations or suspected violations of references C and D.

4.b.6. Encourage, collect, and report feedback from the personnel attending the training.

4.b.7. No later than 2 April 2021, training for civilian employees must be documented in their official training jacket, either by supervisor entry into MYBIZ+ or the Total Workforce Management System (TWMS), or via mass updates from TWMS training coordinators.

4.c. COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS.

4.c.1. Commanders may supplement the provided training materials, as long as doing so is in keeping with the references.

4.c.2. Documenting and reporting training for uniformed service members.

4.c.2.a. Units will document training via the use of unit training rosters.

4.c.2.b. Official training completion will be captured in MCTIMS.

4.c.2.b.1. When recording unit training in MCTIMS, personnel with unit training management permissions perform the following steps:

4.c.2.b.1.a. Log into MCTIMS.

4.c.2.b.1.b. Select 'Unit Training' or 'UTM' and create a calendar event.

4.c.2.b.1.c. Complete the details of the event.

4.c.2.b.1.d. Identify the appropriate subordinate units.

4.c.2.b.1.e. Upload the associated planning documents into the document tab.

4.c.2.b.1.f. In the "Requirements" tab, Select 'Add Requirements' then select "SECDEF Directed Extremism Stand Down Training".

4.c.2.b.1.g. Select 'Roster' button, then select the 'Add Marines' button to identify Marines being trained.

4.c.2.b.1.h. Then click 'Add Selected' button. Select 'Score' then 'Submit for Certification'.

4.c.2.b.1.i. Certifier will log into MCTIMS, go to 'Unit Training' and select IMM tab, select 'Score sheets' then select appropriate submitted score sheet form the 'Active' tab. Select 'Submit for Certification'.

4.c.3. Documenting and reporting the completion of training for civilian personnel. Commands requiring technical assistance with TWMS may contact their servicing Human Resource Office TWMS local administrator or MPC30@USMC.MIL.

4.c.4. No later than 2 April 2021, major component commands (i.e., MARFORCOM,

MARFORPAC, MARCENT, etc.) will report completion of training to the Staff Director of the Marine Corps for review.

4.d. PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE. Headquarters Marine Corps, Communication Directorate has provided guidance to Communication Strategy and Operations offices regarding coverage of the training.

5. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS.

5.a. Training may be conducted virtually or in-person, in compliance with COVID-19 mitigation measures.

5.b. Commanders are encouraged to seek the assistance of a judge advocate or counsel in support of the training, when available.

5.c. Follow-on clarifying guidance will be pushed out via DONTRACKER to the component commands with instructions on reporting feedback from the training stand-down to the Staff Director of the Marine Corps. The DONTRACKER task ID will be 2021-DMCS-4634.

6. Release authorized by Major General Gregg P. Olson, Staff Director of the Marine Corps.//